Coates, Eyler Robert
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AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED.

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A MUSIC LIBRARY FOR THE BLIND AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED

by Eyler Robert Coates

Surely, no one would dispute the idea that the one music library in the nation serving the entire blind and physically handicapped community should be as good as the best music libraries serving everyone else. There is even some justification for saying that this library should provide better music library services than that available to others. It is a well recognized fact that music tends to have a greater importance to the blind than to the sighted. Although the blind musician may experience some difficulty acquiring the musical information he needs for playing or singing, his blindness is almost no disadvantage at all in the actual performance of music. Moreover, he is able to participate in the art of music more freely than in any of the other arts. If music services are so important to the handicapped, should not they be given special emphasis?

As important as music is to the blind, the opportunities for blind students to study music and to have ready access to music materials do not seem to exist in proportion to that importance. It must not be assumed, however, that this situation is the result of some conspiracy of neglect. It derives, rather, from problems inherent in the nature of the services.

Recognizing the importance of music to the blind, the Congress in 1962 established by special legislation the Library of Congress program of music for the blind. Later, when the scope of services performed by the Division for the Blind was enlarged to include the physically handicapped, music services were similarly extended. The Music Section of the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (DBPH) is first a library, but it is also much more than a library. It "develops, maintains, and promotes the use of the national collection of musical

letter reg. 3/13/78

scores and instructional texts," but it is also charged with encouraging "the development of new techniques and materials for teaching" (Library of Congress Regulations, 213-4.2).

All the materials in this music library are highly specialized and require special treatment from their production to their cataloging and circulation. Almost all of the circulation takes place through the mails, and the service area covered includes not only the entire United States but extends to any eligible U.S. citizen living anywhere in the world.

The challenges of music library services for the blind and physically handicapped are to develop materials, methods, and techniques that will, in spite of the special difficulties, make those services as good as or better than those available to the nonhandicapped. One of the special problems associated with this development is letting those who need or could use these services know of the existence and full scope of that which is available.

Most blind and physically handicapped library patrons probably know that the Library of Congress has a music library for their use, but it is likely that many are unacquainted with all the various types of materials and services that have been made available to satisfy their musical interests. The following information is presented to remedy this situation and to suggest means that each reader may utilize to sustain his own musical interests and needs.

The Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped provides braille music scores and braille books about music, music instruction on cassettes and on records, music books on records and on magnetic tape, large print music scores, music periodicals in braille and on records, reference services in all areas of music, and training for volunteer music transcribers. The scope and emphasis in each of these areas vary according to the requirements of the users of each.

BRAILLE MUSIC

This is the largest segment of the collection, consisting of over 24,000 items. This medium is used most often by the more serious student and professional musician, and the braille music collection tends to reflect this more serious interest. It includes some popular music, but chief emphasis is on the classics. The level of difficulty for voice and the instruments most frequently played by the blind extends from method books for beginners through most of the standard repertoire used by undergraduates in college music programs. The collection is quite extensive in piano and organ, somewhat less so in voice and violin, and considerably less so in other instruments.

Any blind music student interested in becoming a professional musician would be well advised to learn braille music. The learning of braille music usually occurs under the instruction of a teacher, and Music Section has several books to aid the blind student in this study. Helpful manuals in braille and available for loan from Music Section include:

Primer of Braille Music, compiled by Edward W. Jenkins. Progressive lessons with exercises for practice in braille music reading, sight singing and playing. Intended for the blind student studying under the guidance of a teacher.

Braille Music Chart, compiled by Edward W. Jenkins. Companion to the Primer. A classified list of braille music symbols.

Index of Braille Music Signs. A sequential listing of the symbols used in braille music.

Revised International Manual of Braille Music Notation 1956, compiled by H. V. Spanner. The official braille music code.

Lessons in Braille Music, prepared by H. V. Spanner. Used with the Revised International Manual by the musician who wishes to learn to transcribe music into braille.

Introduction to Braille Music Transcription, by Mary Turner De Garmo. A thorough, step-by-step instructional manual used by the Library of Congress in the training of braille music transcribers.

How to Read Braille Music, by Bettye Krolick, can help the student who knows literary braille and wishes to acquire a basic knowledge of music braille on his own. It can also be used by a teacher who does not read braille music to guide the blind student in learning braille music. This brief manual contains the music symbols most frequently encountered in elementary to intermediate level music. It is available on loan from the Music Section or may be purchased from the Braille Book Bank, 85 Godwin Avenue, Midland Park, N.J. 07432.

Many of the standard method books are available in braille, including the Michael Aaron, Leila Fletcher, Schaum, Thompson, Williams, and the Oxford for piano; the Eck and Rubank for flute; the Mel Bay, Mann, Manoloff, and Alfred's for guitar; and the Gleason and Pointer System for organ. Most of the Belwin-Mills methods are available for various other instruments.

Piano for the Blind Child, by Sister Mary Mark and Lenore McGuire, is available both in print for the teacher and in braille for the student. It is subtitled A Child's Introduction to Braille Music Reading and begins with a rote learning approach that leads logically to braille music reading.

The Library acquires copies of all the braille music produced by the braille presses in the United States and Great Britain. It is also attempting to acquire some of the output from the braille presses in other countries. In addition, the Library commissions the transcription of many otherwise unavailable works to be produced by braille presses and individual transcribers. A print list of braille music is available from Music Section for voice and each instrument separately.

BRAILLE MUSIC BOOKS

Music books available from Music Section--as distinct from those distributed through the network libraries--include specialized music texts and other works not likely to appeal to the general reader, such as Hindemith's Elementary Training for Musicians and Kent Kennan's Technique of Orchestration. Many of these are texts that a student might need as a music major in college. All the usual college level courses are covered, such as music history, harmony and theory, sight singing, orchestration, form and analysis, and counterpoint. A list in print or braille of braille music books is available from Music Section.

RECORDED AIDS FOR BRAILLE MUSIC

This is a multi-format package containing the regular print copy of a given musical selection for use by the sighted music teacher or accompanist; a copy of the solo part in large print for the partially sighted student; a copy of the solo part in braille for the student who reads or is learning to read braille music; and a tape recording of the solo with short sections played slowly, then up to speed and, finally, with piano accompaniment. Having the solo played slowly in short sections enables the student who can acquire the musical information "by ear" to do so more easily. It also enables the student who is learning braille music to confirm the correctness of what he has read. Each package, therefore, is adaptable to the requirements of almost any blind or partially sighted student. The selections available are generally short instrumental solos with piano accompaniment and include compositions often played at concerts and competitions, such as Cui's Oriental (for oboe), Dvorak's Slavonic Dance (for tenor saxophone), and Buchtel's Asleep in the Deep (for tuba).

Recorded Aid for Beginning Piano, by Levine and Medema, is a self-instructional method for learning to read braille music and to play the piano as well. It is supplied with an instructor's guide in print,

but the method can be used with or without a teacher.

A print list of recorded aids is available from Music Section.

TAPE AND DISC RECORDINGS

Books on tape available from the Music Section include the more specialized titles complete with all music examples performed as scored in the text. There is also a collection of instructional tapes that include an analysis of performance problems along with an actual performance of certain compositions for the piano--the sole instrument for which these are available at present. Instructional tapes are useful for the advanced student who has the braille score before him but needs to hear the music performed in order to become properly oriented. In some cases, the works are played slowly and explained where necessary so that the student can learn the correct notes to play by listening to and following the oral directions. Many blind musicians are able to learn music if it is played slowly and separated into hand-parts at complicated passages.

All recordings furnished by Music Section are for instructional purposes. Patrons wishing to borrow recordings of music for listening only are encouraged to use library and other resources in their local community through which such materials are generally made available.

Instructional discs from Music Section are recorded at 33-1/3 rpm and include many that are commercially available. These discs deal with various music subjects and generally treat the material from an elementary point of view. They are provided by Music Section because they are especially useful to the study of music, and they are not usually available through local sources. Some of the self-instructional methods for piano and guitar (described below under "cassettes") are also available on disc. Music Section attempts to make available all commercial discs in the area of music listed in the

Schwann-2 Catalog that are instructional in nature and not dependent on accompanying printed materials. In addition, many other useful commercially available discs in the area of music but not listed in Schwann-2 are included. Recommendations for additions from users of music services for discs of the latter type are always welcome.

Examples of instructional discs available from Music Section include Explore the Wonderful World of Your Voice, a comprehensive home-study course in voice production and vowel formation, the Art of the Oboe, the Great Composers, An Introduction to Der Ring Des Nibelungen, and a number of discs on music theory, such as Building Blocks of Music, Forms in Instrumental Music, Modal Counterpoint, and the 5-part series Musical Form and Style. A print list of instructional open-reel tapes and of instructional records is available from Music Section.

BOLD NOTE MUSIC

This large-print collection emphasizes beginning methods, easy pieces for playing, and songs for recreational singing. The majority of users are young beginners with limited vision and older persons who have lost part of their sight. This means there is an emphasis on method books for the beginners and easy pieces for playing and singing for both the beginners and the older users. Advanced students are often able to learn and memorize their music with regular print editions and magnifying aids. Nevertheless, advanced pieces are gradually being added to the collection in an effort to discover if there is a real need for more large-print music at that level. The largest part of the collection is for piano and voice, but most other instruments are also represented.

The Schaum piano series is available in a large-note edition up through grade three. The bold-note collection also includes beginning methods for voice, violin, organ, guitar, recorder, and other wind instruments. In addition to these methods, there is a substantial collection of easy-to-moderately difficult pieces for performance, such as Joy of Piano, by Agay, Enjoy Your Recorder, by the Trapp Family

Singers, and 24 Italian Songs and Arias (Schirmer Edition). A large-print catalog of bold-note music is available from Music Section.

CASSETTES

The most popular items in the collection of cassettes are the beginning instructional courses for piano, organ, and guitar. These elementary methods are especially useful to the student with a more casual interest in music, e.g., one who just wants to learn to strum a few chords on the guitar in order to accompany his own singing. The courses do not require that the student learn to read either braille or print music. Nevertheless, they are based on solid musical fundamentals and the user could later study music more seriously if he chose.

Key to the Keys (4 cassettes), by Gale Pederson, is available on both disc and cassette. Using the Pederson method, the student learns to play chords and melodies on the piano without the necessity of learning to read braille or print music notation. Similarly, Don Hoffer's Guitar Method for the Blind (4 cassettes) begins with instruction in the basic chords and then moves on to the playing of folk tunes with accompanying guitar chords. Bill Irwin's Popular Organ Instruction (3 levels; 9 cassettes each level) includes playing techniques, improvisation, and advanced embellishments.

The Music Section also makes available a collection of instructional cassettes containing discussions, demonstrations, and rehearsals of music and interviews with well-known musicians. The collection includes most of the University Microfilm series of cassettes on the subject of music. A wide variety of topics are covered, such as opera, electronic music, folk, jazz, and rock. Many of the programs are devoted to discussions with, rehearsals and master classes by, and interviews with renowned musicians and composers that are not available in any other format.

PERIODICAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

The New Braille Musician is published bimonthly by the Music Section. It is a sampler of articles from print music periodicals and also includes original articles, announcements, and lists of recent acquisitions. Subscriptions may be ordered directly from Music Section or through a network library.

Several other music magazines are available through the network libraries cooperating with DBPH. These include Overtones (bimonthly), a braille sampler similar to the New Braille Musician; Braille Musical Magazine (monthly), a British publication; Braille Piano Technician (bimonthly), for the piano tuner and repairman; and Music Journal (10 issues a year) and Stereo Review (monthly), both on 8-rpm rigid disc.

The New Braille Musician, print edition, is a cumulation of all the original articles appearing in the braille edition and is issued semi-annually. It is produced for the benefit of teachers, librarians, and others who work with blind musicians and who would find it useful to know the contents of the braille edition. It contains all the original material appearing in the braille edition, including reviews of recent acquisitions and complete tables of contents for the bimonthly braille edition. Subscriptions are available free directly from the Music Section.

The following music periodicals are not available through the DBPH program, but may be obtained directly from the producing agency.

Music City Soundtrack is issued monthly on cassette and is concerned with country and western music. It is available on inter-library loan through any network library.

Piano Tuners' Quarterly is in braille and is available for purchase from the Royal National Institute for the Blind, 224 Great Portland Street, London, W1N 6AA, England, for approximately $.50 per year.

BORROWING PROCEDURES

Any blind or physically handicapped individual who is unable to use conventional printed material is eligible for the services. All music materials except those distributed through the national program are circulated directly to readers free of charge from the Music Section, Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20542. Requests for music materials received by a network library are forwarded to the Music Section, but patrons are asked to send their requests directly to the Music Section for speedier service.

Books, scores, and recordings are loaned for two months and renewable for an indefinite number of two-month periods thereafter as long as they are being used. Materials requested but not available because in circulation are automatically placed on reserve.

Catalogs and lists describing the collection are available for all the various formats. Braille lists are available for voice, chorus, and each instrument separately. A packet of brochures and other descriptive material will be sent to a teacher or blind music student on request, together with any catalogs or lists that may also be of interest.

WATS TELEPHONE SERVICE

Patrons may use the Division's IN-WATS telephone number (800/424-8567) provided the call is related only to music services and materials and concerns matters requiring speedy action or involving problems that should be discussed with the Music Section staff. A caller should understand he can leave a number but it may not be possible to return the call until later that day or the next. Patrons with routine requests are asked to send their requests to Music Section by mail.

REFERENCE SERVICES

The Music Section has a small reference collection and will perform reference services for blind or physically handicapped music patrons. Such things as assistance with making selections from the Schwann catalog for personal record collections, or descriptive information from music school catalogs about degree programs may be obtained by calling or writing the Music Section. Inquiries which go beyond the scope of this reference collection can be relayed by Music Section to the Library of Congress Music Division, one of the world's great music libraries with outstanding resources in all areas of music.

VOLUNTEER COPYING AND TRANSCRIBING

Music Section does not produce materials as a service to individuals. It will, however, consider requests and have the material transcribed if the item would make a suitable addition to the collection. Persons wishing material transcribed for their own use, i.e., material which would not be appropriate for general circulation, should attempt to have the material transcribed by a volunteer agency or individual transcriber. The network library serving the user's area can assist in locating a volunteer transcriber.

The booklet, "Volunteers Who Produce Books" (available from Music Section), lists agencies in each state that do volunteer copying and transcribing. If a user of music services is unable to locate a suitable agency, the Braille Music Specialist in the DBPH Volunteer Training Section can help in locating an individual who transcribes braille music.

The Music Section maintains a Union Catalog of Braille and Large-Print Music Scores which are in process of production or completed. Intention and completion notices are received from transcribers throughout the United States. The Section can advise any interested person if a specific composition has been transcribed or is in process of being transcribed.

The program of music for the blind and physically handicapped is constantly growing. There is a never-ending list of possibilities for the future that is a challenge to the staff of the Music Section. There are many areas of the collections and the services which allow for expansion and improvement. Suggestions from users of music services are important because they help the staff to recognize shortcomings and to establish priorities. All suggestions are given careful consideration. If you have any comments on the music services provided by this Division, please do not hesitate to write.

Library of Congress
Music Section
Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped
Washington, D.C. 20542

Mr. Coates is Head of the Music Section, Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, The Library of Congress.

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